

Rochester Institute of Technology RIT Scholar Works

Theses

Thesis/Dissertation Collections

5-2015

Guests' Waiting Experience at Hotels: Evidence From Saudi Arabia

Khaled Alsumait

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Alsumait, Khaled, "Guests' Waiting Experience at Hotels: Evidence From Saudi Arabia" (2015). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Thesis/Dissertation Collections at RIT Scholar Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of RIT Scholar Works. For more information, please contact ritscholarworks@rit.edu.

GUESTS' WAITING EXPERIENCE AT HOTELS: EVIDENCE FROM SAUDI ARABIA

A thesis submitted to College of Applied Science of Rochester
Institute of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
MANAGEMENT**

By

Khaled Alsumait

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management,
Rochester Institute of Technology

May 2015

Committee Approval:

Muhammet Kesgin

Date: 05/19/15

Advisor/Examination Chairperson

Carol Whitlock

Date: 05/19/15

Committee Member/Department Chair

Advisor/Advisor

Richard Lagiewski

Date: 05/19/15

Committee Member

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to explore guests' waiting experience at hotels in Saudi Arabia, as well as the role of delay on overall experience. Investigating the effects of guests' waiting experience on service quality and subsequent satisfaction with overall experience is the main aim of this study. In particular, this study had three objectives. First, to explore guests' perceptions about their wait experiences in the hospitality industry. Second, to understand the factors that cause unacceptable waiting times. Third, to provide some important insights into the management of the long waiting times in the hotel industry.

Employing a qualitative method, the study was conducted by interviewing 15 guests in person at a five-star hotel in Riyadh. The study also included interviews with four hotel staff at the same hotel. Based on a semi-structured approach, the interview questions were drawn from three main sources: the objectives of the study, the relevant literature, and empirical studies focusing on customers' wait experiences in the hospitality industry.

The study found that the majority of guests were more satisfied by the services provided and hotel location. However, the observed unsatisfactory service was the crowding in the hotel parking located in the basement of the hotel. Many guests faced a delay with valet car service. Another important finding was the variety of food offered at the hotel restaurant. Food variety was limited at breakfast time, and there was a long queue at the buffet table. Although there were some delays at the hotel, guests were satisfied with their overall experience. The most interesting finding was that the hotel doesn't engage the guest in activities during the waiting period unless the service provider fails to provide the service on time.

Acknowledgements

Several individuals have played important roles in conducting this study. Without their support, this study would not have been possible.

First of all, I want to express special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Muhammet Kesgin. His suggestions and critiques were the most helpful resource during the development of this thesis.

I would also like to thank the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) in Riyadh for help in collecting data. Special thanks to my friend Mohammed Al Shehri, who works at SCTA, for his hard work facilitating the process of collecting data at hotels.

Also, I would like to thank my program advisor, Ms. Jayne Downes, for her longtime support. Without her help and the facilitation she offered, this thesis would not have been completed.

I would like to convey my gratitude to my program advisor, Rick Lagiewski. I have learned several new aspects of the hospitality industry and in particular the resort industry.

Thanks to Dr. Alaa Alsarabi, faculty at King Saud University, for his recommendations during the development of this thesis. His insightful information kept me on the right track. I appreciate his valuable ideas and his academic experience has guided me to achieve my goals through conducting this study.

I also have to thank my friend Seza Zerman from Turkey who has earned her Master's degree from the same department at Rochester Institute of Technology. She guided me and supported me since I started my thesis project. Best wishes to her in her PhD study.

A great thank goes to my wife. She always provided the perfect atmosphere that encourages hard work.

And special thanks go to my brothers for helping me and pushing me forward to achieve what I am today. Their advice and suggestions were helpful to me, and I believe they were a reason for my success today.

Finally, the biggest thanks go to my parents, who are always here to help me. I thank them for supporting me throughout my academic journey. The hardest part during this journey was that they were far away from me, but their lovely words and advice were standing with me throughout. My parents made me the man I am today.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

My father Fahad Alsumait

My mother Huda Alsumait

My wife Huryah Alsultan

And to all my brothers:

Abdulrahman Alsumait

Ahmed Fahad Alsumait

Saleh Fahad Alsumait

Abdulmalek Alsumait

Abdalmajeed Alsumait

My son Mishair Alsumait

Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Contents	vii
List of Illustrations.....	ix
List of Tables	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	10
1.1. Inroduction.....	10
1.2. Background to the research	10
1.3. Purpose of this Study	11
1.4. Problem Statement and Significance	12
1.5. Research Questions.....	12
1.6. Overview of the Thesis.....	12
2. Chapter 2: Review of Literature	13
2.1. Overview	13
2.2. Introduction	13
2.3. Delays and Perceptions of Service Quality and Satisfaction.....	16
2.3.1. Managing Actual Wait Time.....	20
2.3.2. Managing Perceived Wait Time.....	21
2.3.3. Managing the Impact of Delay.....	23
3. Chapter 3: Methodology.....	26
3.1. Introduction	26
3.2. Research Design	26
3.3. Study Setting.....	27
3.4. Data Collection Process.....	27
3.5. Instruments	29
3.6. Participants	30

3.7. Data Analysis.....	30
4. Chapter 4: Results and Discussions.....	32
4.1. Introduction	32
4.2. Results of Analysis	32
4.3. Participants	33
4.4. Commonalities.....	36
4.5. Discussion of the results	39
4.5.1. Food and Beverage.....	39
4.5.2. Room Division	40
4.5.3. General Services.....	42
4.5.4. Other Services	43
5. Chapter 5: Conclusion	45
5.1. Introduction	45
5.2. Summary of Major Findings.....	45
5.3. Suggestions, Recommendations, Implications, and Limitations	47
References.....	50
6. Appendices.....	54
6.1. Appendix A: The consent form (English version).....	55
6.2. Appendix B: The consent form (Arabic version)	56
6.3. Appendix C: Interview Questions	57
6.4. Appendix D: Support letter from the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities 58	
6.5. Appendix E: Translation of the support letter	59
6.6. Appendix F: Coding by Nodes	60

List of Illustrations

Figure 4-1 Percentage of Participants	33
Figure 4-3 Nationality of Participants.....	33
Figure 4-2 Genders of Participants	34
Figure 4-4 Commonalities Among Guests	36

List of Tables

Table 4-1 Participants Information	35
Table 4-2 Most Enjoyable and Least Enjoyable services at the hotel	37
Table 4-3 The Level of Satisfaction about services and overall experience.....	38

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the main objective of this thesis. The first section provides an overview of the importance of customers' wait experiences in the hospitality industry, and the second section discusses the purpose of this thesis. The third section provides a statement of the problem and its importance. Research questions are stated in the fifth section, and the sixth section explores the content of this thesis. The researcher seeks to understand the issues that stand as a barrier in enhancing guests wait experience in the hotel industry in particular and the guest experience in general.

1.2. Background to the research

In the hotel industry, waiting for service is a negative experience for many guests. Their experiences might affect the service provider directly when waiting time is not managed well. When the waiting time is not managed well, many guests might leave the site and never return. This effect might make the service provider lose both guests and revenue. Many businesses assume that enhancing customers' experiences will reflect positively on the reputation of the firm. Many hotels have started to focus more directly on creating enjoyable staying experience for guests; therefore the competition among hotels has increased, and many of these hotels seek to attract new guests as permanent customers. The quality of guests' experiences during inevitable waiting times could be the essential factor that controls the success of these hospitality businesses or could be a major detriment. The cost is unlimited when customers lose trust in a hospitality provider. A long waiting time influences customers' satisfaction with the service provider, and can give customers a negative experience.

The waiting experience could be positive when managed well. Dickson, Ford, and Laval (2005) discuss waiting time in the Walt Disney experience and how Disney controls customers' perceptions. According to their study, two strategies have been examined at Walt Disney. The first strategy is demand shifting, which allows customers to stay at the parks for three extra hours after closing the rides to allow them to enjoy the attractions when most guests have left. The second strategy, which is known as the Fast Pass ticket, makes

customers wait for an activity but not wait in line. Guests can enjoy other activities and then come back to the reserved activity at a specific time to enter. As demonstrated in this example, Walt Disney has made the inevitable waiting time an enjoyable experience.

Guest satisfaction is critical for a positive service assessment. When customers are happy, the service quality will be highly rated. However, Taylor (1994) believes that when guests feel they wait for too long for a service, the overall service quality will be considered/rated less than satisfactory. Even if the service quality is impressive, a long wait will affect the final outcome of the experience.

Many factors, both internal and external, could cause a long wait. Internal factors are easier for the service provider to control, such as the number and capacity of employees. Early on, managers should anticipate the number of guests at a specific time in order to plan for capacity. This early anticipation would prepare the service provider to have a specific number of employees ready to meet customers' needs at peak times of day. For external factors, such as events and peak seasons, if service providers cannot manage their service timing, then waiting occurs. However, recovery strategies are used commonly to compensate customers for waiting.

1.3. Purpose of this Study

The researcher was motivated to explore this problem for three purposes. The first purpose was to understand guests' perceptions about their wait experiences in the hotel industry. By understanding guests' views about service received at a given time, this important information might determine whether their experiences are positive or negative. These outcomes can help service providers focus their performance and design on providing a good experience for guests. The second purpose was to assist the hospitality industry by finding different solutions for long waiting times. Since the data was collected in Saudi Arabian hotel, the researcher aimed to enhance guests' experiences by investigating guests' and managers' perceptions about the wait experience for guests in these locations. The third purpose of this thesis was to deeply understand the factors that cause unacceptable waiting times. Exploring and analyzing these factors might assist in developing a positive customer waiting experience. Suggestions and recommendations to service managers are provided in chapter five of this thesis.

1.4. Problem Statement and Significance

Often guests face some delays getting service in hotels and restaurants. This delay is perceived as a negative experience, and businesses could lose many customers when the delay occurs. Losing customers leads to a decrease in the revenue of businesses, which directly affects their image and profit. Furthermore, this delay could make guests lose trust in the service provider.

Several factors play an important role in the delays, such as the type of service, quality of service and the capacity of the location. However, many strategies might be used to minimize the waiting time and engage customers in different activities at the property to make their waiting experience pleasurable.

1.5. Research Questions

This thesis addresses the following research questions:

1. How does perception of waiting time affect perceived service quality?
2. What do hotels provide in terms of engaging customers in activities during the wait?
3. To what extent can customers tolerate the wait at a service location? And what recovery strategies are used by hotels?

1.6. Overview of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduces a brief background on the guests' waiting time, the purpose of the study, problem significance, statement, and research questions. Chapter two is a review of the previous studies about guests' perceptions of waiting time, queues, the impact of delay, and perceived service quality. The third chapter addresses research design, methodology, data collection procedure, and criteria in selecting the sample. Results and discussion are described in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter is the conclusion, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

2. Chapter 2: Review of Literature

2.1. Overview

This chapter reviews the existing literature pertaining to guests' wait experiences and service quality. The first section in this chapter is an introduction to guests' wait experiences. The impact of delay and perception of service quality and satisfaction are discussed in the second section. The third section explores different methods to reduce the actual waiting time. Controlling guests' perceptions and reducing the perceived wait are reviewed in the fourth section. The last section reviews different styles to manage the impact of delays in service.

2.2. Introduction

Waiting for a service is considered an annoying experience for many guests and might negatively affect the guests' perceptions about that service provider (Taylor, 1994). When guests face such as a long waiting during their experience, their perceptions about that experience with the provider overall might be affected due to the duration and quality of waiting. The perceived wait differs from place to place according to the quality and level of service provided.

Guests mostly seek to enjoy new experiences that make their time spent memorable. In the hospitality industry, guests pay for a product, a service, and an unforgettable experience to enhance their desires. Their experiences often are affected by the waiting time for service; therefore, providing good service in an acceptable time frame helps a business achieve guest satisfaction.

Enhancing the guest experience is the main challenge for many businesses. In the hospitality industry, businesses seek to enhance guests' experiences through the variety of services offered such as personalizing and customizing. However, those services are time dependent. When guests are not served in an acceptable amount of time, the evaluation of the experience could be negatively influenced, directly affecting guests' satisfaction. However, many studies suggest that controlling guests' perceptions can alleviate the negative impact of the service delay. Influencing guests' perceptions about the service provider might influence the wait positively (Katz, Larson, & Larson, 1991). Also, waiting during the experience could be

positive or negative; thus, understanding guests' perceptions is critical in creating an unforgettable experience.

Guest satisfaction is a major concern for service providers, and waiting for service might decrease guest satisfaction about their experience (Pruyn & Smidts, 1998). Service promises might be broken when guests reserve a time and then have to wait (McDougall & Levesque, 1999). Therefore, many service providers attempt to fill guests' waiting times with activities to make their waiting times enjoyable. Studies reveal that occupied time increases positive wait assessments and reduces perceived boredom. Guests who are joining an activity during the wait experience tend to be more satisfied and less bored (McGuire, Kimes, Lynn, Pullman, & Lloyd, 2010). However, Pruyn and Smidts (1998) and Chebat and Filiatrault (1993) state that commonly offered activities might be boring or routine for guests. Durrande, Moreau, and Usunier (1999) conducted a study about the waiting experience. They attempted to link the actual length of waiting and guests' time styles (general attitude toward time) to the way they experience the waiting time. This study suggests that customers' wait experiences relied on two variables—their own time and the real waiting time. Results revealed that when waiting times become longer, guests become passively impatient and less satisfied as they observe the service. Even if the service were perfect, they might not observe that because of the long waiting. Therefore, the duration of wait plays an important role in determining the quality of service.

Jones and Dent (1994) distributed a survey to 50 hotel guests and 50 restaurant customers in order to determine guests' concerns about their experiences. The results showed that more than 70% of respondents were worried about their waiting times. Also, results showed that hotel guests were willing to pay more to avoid waiting in lines, but they still acknowledged that quality required waiting. This study found that waiting directly influences the customers' moods. When the duration of the wait begins to exceed the acceptable waiting time, the perception of service quality is affected. For example, it has been suggested that the meal experience should be completed within 45 minutes if the guest so desires. In addition, the hotel telephone should be answered within three rings in order to enhance guests' satisfaction (Jones & Dent, 1994).

Dawes and Rowley (1996) state that two reasons would make the wait experience central to the overall experience. First, it is often the first meeting between the service provider and the guest. Second, it might become an unforgettable experience (in negative terms) because the

customer might experience regret during the wait (Dawes & Rowley, 1996). Thus, the service providers should be aware of these two reasons in order to avoid delivering a negative experience to guests.

Many strategies are used when a delay in service occurs. These strategies are assistance, apology and compensation. McDougall and Terrence (1999) explored the service recovery strategies provided in hotels and restaurants. They found that assistance plus compensation are the most effective strategies when the service provider breaks a promise regarding the wait for service. However, the results of their study suggest that when a service failure involving waiting occurs, recovery strategies will not lead to a positive future for the service provider because it would cost the service provider much money. Investigating what guests are looking for is the first step in providing a good experience through a deeper understanding of their needs and interests.

The time of the experience plays an important role in determining its success. Rush hours can cause a delay in service. Davis and Vollmann (1990) investigated guests' waiting times and their level of satisfaction in a fast food restaurant. They found that guests who seem to be impatient are guests who have limited time for their lunch break. Also, they found that guests might accept waiting in a queue when a store was busy, because there is a recognizable aim, such as the quality of products and services, for the wait (Davis & Vollmann, 1990).

In the hospitality businesses, the number of necessary workers can be determined according to the demand for the desired experience. The number of employees might affect the final outcome of guests' experiences. A limited number of staff might not meet the demand for the service. Lee and Lambert (2006) investigated waiting time management. They conducted their data in a university cafeteria. The main aim of this study was to investigate the acceptable waiting time for guests. They found that the number of employees plays an important role in serving guests within an acceptable time; therefore, they concluded that extra employees are needed in rush hours to serve guests in that acceptable time.

The capacity of a facility is critical. The capacity directly affects the guests' experience when it is not designed well. When the demand exceeds the capacity of the restaurant, customers begin waiting in a queue and notice that capacity is inadequate (Corsten & Stuhlmann, 1998). Guests are more likely to be frustrated when demand exceeds capacity (Hwang & Lambert, 2009). Hwang and Lambert (2009) used a simulation method to measure guests' waiting

times with a restaurant's performance. The results revealed that capacity levels must be regulated in order to meet guest service standards. Providing inadequate resources in order to meet the demand could result in the following consequences:

1. Guests might leave the place of service before being served.
2. Guests may not enter the place of service if the wait is too long.
3. Service provider could neglect the essential services and make some mistakes because of guest frustration (Hwang & Lambert, 2009).

The acceptable waiting times are subjective. Different studies have been done to find average acceptable times. Hwang and Lambert (2006) investigated acceptable waiting times that customers were looking for. The study revealed that guests' expectation levels (satisfactory, unsatisfactory, and very unsatisfactory) and the service process were the two most important factors that determine appropriate waiting times. The authors believe that capacity can determine acceptable waiting times. The result of this study revealed that guests could tolerate the wait according to stages. Guests could afford to wait longer in some stages, such as the seating stage and serving stage, but in some stages, such ordering and paying, guests would not accept the long wait. A study conducted at a hotel in Pennsylvania and found that the acceptable waiting time should not exceed 120 seconds in order to meet customers' expectations (Kokkinou & Cranage, 2013).

2.3. Delays and Perceptions of Service Quality and Satisfaction

The long wait during an experience has many negative consequences for service providers. Delays in service could lead to low ratings in the final evaluation of service quality or a decline in the revenue. Since guests perceive delay as a negative experience, some of them might attempt to employ other people to wait for them, asking another person to wait instead of them, and pay him/her for the time he/she waited. Thus, managers always work on minimizing the wait because they know that waiting could affect the property's evaluations negatively (Taylor, 1994).

Service quality is correlated with guest satisfaction, and this relationship is influenced by the waiting time for the service. When waiting times become longer, guests become passively impatient and less satisfied when they observe what they perceive as slow service (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999). Even if the quality of the service is impressive, the long wait

might make guests not to identify the impressive quality. Therefore, managing the waiting time requires a deep understanding of the link between guest satisfaction and perception of service quality (Lee & Lambert, 2006).

Guests might face the wait in different stages at the service location, and these different stages play an important role in determining guest satisfaction with service quality. These different stages are: the wait before the experience, the wait during the experience, and the wait after the experience. Hensley and Sulek (2007) conducted a study about guest satisfaction with the waits, the service, and the employees' behavior in terms of customers' perceptions of the service quality. Three different stages were considered in this study—the wait at the service entry, the wait during the core service, and the wait after the core service. Results revealed that the only wait satisfaction that influenced guests' perceptions of the service quality was waiting in the service entry. This study indicated also that the wait before the core service was more important than the wait during and after the service (Hensley & Sulek, 2007).

The emotions of guests toward delay affected their satisfaction with service quality. While the waiting time increased, customers' negative affective reactions became stronger. A study done in 2005 examined the effect of waiting time on the assessment of service quality and satisfaction. The authors collected data about the real waiting times and the expected waiting times associated with satisfaction. The results of this study revealed that guests' expected waiting times could negatively affect satisfaction if their waiting time expectations are not satisfactorily met (Lee & Lambert, 2005). Furthermore, Davis and Maggard (1990) concluded that waiting time is inversely linked to customer satisfaction: when the wait becomes longer, the customer becomes more dissatisfied with the service. In addition, they believe that the initial wait prior to entering the service location affects guest satisfaction with the service.

Long waits have a direct relationship with emotions. Delays lead to negative affective reactions. These negative reactions are divided into two types: uncertainty and anger (Taylor, 1994). Guests feel comfortable when they become certain about the time that they are going to spend in the waiting area (Larson, 1987). These two types of negative reactions directly affect guests' mood about the experience: when the guest becomes uncertain about the delay, he/she will be less satisfied with the service. Uncertainty could create an extreme atmosphere of worry for the guest (Maister, 1985). In addition, guests' moods could be affected

negatively during the delay; therefore, guests might not perceive high service quality (Taylor, 1994). People in negative situations might observe everything as negative because of the original situation. It has been suggested that the feelings of uneasiness that guests face during the wait need to be controlled more than the quality of the service process (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999). Therefore, guests always need to be informed and updated about the duration of waiting.

It is important to meet guests' desires to ensure success in the hospitality business. Meeting guests' expectations enhances the satisfaction about the service and increases loyalty. Bitran and Lojo (1993) found that through shortening guests' waiting time, many advantages would be provided to the business such as improving guests' satisfaction. Guests' satisfaction is reflected in the quality of operational service to minimize waiting time. One study found that guests' expectations and satisfaction were dependent on four factors as following:

1. The previous experience of the guest.
2. Customer's wait number in the service area.
3. The importance of time to the guest.
4. Engaging customers in different activities. (Dawes and Rowley, 1996)

The atmosphere of the service location affects guests' satisfaction with the wait. The condition and status of the location play a critical role in determining whether or not it is crowded. A study that investigated the impact of crowding on control of waiting and guest satisfaction found that guests who prefer going to crowded providers were more satisfied than those who do not have a choice (Hui & Bateson, 1991). The results of this study revealed that when people have to wait for a longer time, the less control they have and the more crowded they feel. Stokols (1972) noted that perceived crowding makes guests anxious and annoyed. These feelings negatively impact guest satisfaction in terms of service quality.

It has been suggested that the service delivery process, including waiting time, influences service quality. This influence might be negative or positive. When the waiting time is rapid, guests might observe the service quality as a good value. To the contrary, guests also might consider the service quality as a poor value when the waiting time becomes longer. A study of bank customers concluded that customers' assessment of service quality was impacted not only by the end service received but also by the waiting time (Chebat *et al.*, 1995).

Several factors play an important role in affecting guest satisfaction with waiting time. Davis & Heineke (1998) explored customers' satisfaction in hospitality by looking into three areas—"defining customer satisfaction," "measuring guest satisfaction," and "determining the factors that affect the level of guest satisfaction." They identified several factors that could affect customer satisfaction in the waiting line. These factors were categorized into three groups based on the ability of the service manager to control them. The three groups are as follows:

1. Factors controlled by the business.
2. Factors that can be managed slightly by the business such as expectations.
3. External factors that cannot be managed by the business such as the number of guests.

They concluded that when the actual waiting time became longer, many guests became dissatisfied. This study recommended that service managers be in charge of finding new approaches to influence guests' perceptions during the actual waiting time, in addition to reducing that actual waiting time.

The stage of wait plays an important role in affecting the evaluation of service quality. Since guests might wait in different stages during their experience, the assessment of service differs in these phases. Guests mostly experience three different stages when they wait for service—before, during, and after the experience. The evaluation of service in these stages varies. The majority of guests are dissatisfied with the waiting time mostly in the pre-process. Taylor (1994) identified three different types of pre-process waiting as follows:

1. Pre schedule: guests who arrive early for a reservation.
2. Post schedule: guests waiting to get service.
3. Queue waits: when guests come without reservations and wait to be seated.

Many factors have a direct impact on customer satisfaction and waiting time. According to Sarkar, Mukhopadhyay, and Ghosh (2011) five factors could impact the waiting times: "service rate," "the system arrival date," "time of the day" "type of service," and "the efficiency of the servers." In the same study, the authors found that 54% of dissatisfied bank customers suffered from long waiting times. This indicates that waiting time is considered an indicator that determines customer satisfaction with the final service quality.

2.3.1. Managing Actual Wait Time

Reducing the actual waiting time is considered the last solution for service managers because this solution requires some changes in the operating system that could result in a loss for the business. Instead of reducing the actual waiting times for guests, the goal of service managers should be to control guests' perceptions in order to reduce the perceived waiting times. However, many strategies could be used to reduce the actual waiting times. Self-service technology has been investigated to decrease guest wait times. A self-service kiosk could increase the resources of service in reducing customer waiting times; therefore, managers might take advantage of this option in order to accelerate the processes of service to save guests from waiting (Kokkinou & Cranage, 2013). Study results indicate that implementing a self-service kiosk will help to enhance the service level and save guests time by reducing the average waiting time.

On the other hand, a self-service could be a source of disturbance when it is not managed well. The self-service kiosk could also delay the service when the guest faces difficulty using the machine. The self-service kiosk might become disrupted during its usage, which could increase the waiting time for guests until they get support from an employee (Kokkinou & Cranage, 2013). Therefore, it has been recommended that service managers employ support employees next to the self-service machines in order to assist the guests when the machine is disrupted.

Organizing the service location would provide many advantages for guests and service managers. Providing the proper capacity is the key to controlling the actual waiting time. New approaches have been investigated to managing waiting times. The study suggested two ways to keep the wait as short as possible—by providing a proper capacity to serve expected customers at a given time and by designing an appropriate queue system to accelerate the wait process (Dickson *et al.*, 2005).

Early anticipations about potential guests help the service provider to manage the actual waiting time. The information gathered about expected guests help the service provider reduce the actual waiting times. With the actual waiting times, data and essential information are gathered by managers in order to determine the following factors:

1. The number of guests who will arrive in a given time period.

2. The pattern of the guests.
3. The rate of available capacity to serve the number of expected guests (Dickson *et al.*, 2005).

The management of tables at hotels and restaurants has a positive advantage in controlling the actual waiting time. Efficient management of a restaurant's tables could reduce the waiting times for guests before being seated. Hwang (2008) found that service providers could reduce guests' waiting time and offer rapid service by adjusting the configuration of restaurant tables.

2.3.2. Managing Perceived Wait Time

Engaging guests in different activities could help to reduce the perceived waiting time. When managers cannot control the actual waiting time, it is better to control other variables that could encourage guests to provide positive evaluations of their service experience (Voorhees *et al.*, 2009). Controlling different variables, such as a guest's perception, plays an important role in determining the final outcome of the guest experience. In the hospitality sector, guests are affected by the perceived waiting time more than the actual waiting. When the actual waiting time is less than expected, guests will be happy with the service. However, when the perceived waiting time becomes longer, even if the actual waiting time is short, guests' perceptions might be boredom. Controlling guests' perceptions is critical if service providers fail to manage the actual waiting time (Taylor, 1994).

Managers are in charge of controlling the perceived waiting time. They might use different methods to reduce the perceived waiting time when the actual waiting time becomes longer. When the perceived wait becomes longer, guest satisfaction declines (McDougall & Levesque, 1999). Katz, Larson, and Larson (1991) have done a study suggesting three methods that could control the perceived waiting time:

1. Identify the appropriate waiting time for guests.
2. Engage guests with exciting activities in order to make their waiting time more enjoyable.
3. Make the guests aware of the expected waiting time when they overreact.

Many factors could influence guests' perceptions during the experience and these factors might reflect negatively on the business in terms of waiting time if it is not managed well. Maister (1985) proposed eight factors that could affect guests' perceptions, which are as follows:

1. Unfilled time feels longer than filled time.
2. The waits before service feel longer than during service.
3. Worry makes the wait feel longer.
4. Uncertain waits feel longer than certain waits.
5. Mysterious waits are longer than explained waits.
6. Biased waits are longer than fair waits.
7. The more valued the service, the longer people will wait.
8. Individual waiting feels longer than group waiting.

Maister (1985) and Larson (1987) explained that unoccupied time during the wait could directly affect the guests' experience. Therefore, filling customers' time with different activities would provide a good atmosphere and reduce the perceived waiting time.

Perceived waiting times can directly affect guests' feelings. Guests' emotions are changing during the experience according to the perceived waiting time. When the perceived waiting times become longer, guests' anger increases. Voorhees, Baker, Bourdeau, Brocato, and Cronin (2009) studied the impact of three factors that could alleviate the waiting time anger and waiting time regret relationship. The authors concluded that affective promise, perceived fairness, and physical environment quality affect assessments of the service experience and reduce the impact of waiting time on regret and anger. In other words, this study suggests that guests' perceptions of waiting time have a direct impact on feelings of anger and regret. The authors introduced the three factors mentioned above that could moderate these effects.

Virtual wait might be also used to control the perceived waiting time. The Disney experience with virtual waits was explored in a study done in 2005 (Dickson *et al.*, 2005). This concept was tested for the first time at Disney World in 1998. The aim of the test was to assess guests' responses to the virtual queue and observe how guests spend their time by using this system. The results of this test were positive. The idea behind this strategy was to remove the physical act of standing in line by providing guests with a computer printout that allows the

system to save their place. Subsequently, guests would return to enter the attraction at the specified time. This strategy allowed guests to have free time instead of standing in line.

Meeting guests' expectations at the proper time is considered the primary method to increase guests' satisfaction during the experience. However, when the service provider fails to serve guests in an acceptable time, many consequences could occur. Therefore, good management of guests' perceptions might help to alleviate the effects of the delay. Dickson, Ford, and Laval (2005) state three consequences that could influence the guests' experience if the perceptions of the guests are not managed well. The cost of making them wait could cause three consequences as follows:

1. The guest leaving the line.
2. The guest's conviction not to return to the place again.
3. The guest might tell his/her friends about this negative experience.

The perceived waiting time has more of an impact on guest perception than the actual waiting time. This impact might be positive by engaging guests in different kinds of entertainment; thus, the actual wait remains but the perceived wait becomes shorter than expected. A study found that guests' assessments are affected by the perceived waiting times more than the real waiting times (Pruyn & Smidts, 1998).

When the delay occurs at the service location, guests start to ask about the reason for this delay. When guests perceive that the service provider has control over the reason for the delay, they become more angry and unhappy and the service assessments are rated as unsatisfactory (McDougall & Levesque, 1999). Service managers could affect guest perceptions during the wait by providing outstanding amenities for their guests. When guests enjoy the experience, they do not care about the reason for the delay. Thus, controlling guests' perceptions is necessary in order to provide them with a good experience.

2.3.3. Managing the Impact of Delay

Once delay occurs with a service, compensation or apology can be given to the guest. These strategies are known as recovery strategies. However, service managers must not offer these strategies as the first solution when a delay happens; instead they should create a good atmosphere for the guest and allow him/her to enjoy the experience. Creating enjoyable

experience during the delay would make guests certain about their time and reduce the perceived waiting time. Managers must reduce the level of uncertainty about their service times to increase demand (Kumar & Krishnamurthy, 2008). When uncertainty controls guests' perceptions during the experience, they are more likely to dislike that experience.

The impact of delay might affect the assessment of service quality. The service manager would be disappointed when the service evaluation is less than satisfactory. Reducing the duration of the wait can help to control the impact of the delay. Voorhees, Baker, Bourdeau, Brocato, and Cronin (2009) suggest two ways to manage the impact of waiting time on negative assessments as follows:

1. Decrease the duration of the wait.
2. Affect other variables that could alleviate these negative effects.

Affecting different variables such as a guest's perception would alleviate the effects of the delay. Through controlling guests' perceptions, guests will enjoy the service. The perceived waiting time will be shorter than the actual one. Decreasing the duration of the wait is considered a good solution to avoid the negative impact of the delay, but since the waiting time is subjective, affecting guests' perceptions would be more effective.

Many valuable strategies are used by managers when the service get delayed. A delay in service could occur at different stages at the service location. Choosing the right strategy to use during these different stages alleviates the impact of the delay. A study investigated recovery strategies when service providers failed to deliver a good experience. The results suggest that when the waits happen in the pre-process post-schedule, the service provider must recover the effect of the waits by applying assistance plus a compensation strategy. Also, this study revealed that the failure in core service related to waiting time affected the service provider badly regardless of recovery strategies (McDougall & Levesque, 1999). These negative effects cost the service provider money for no reason. In other words, the service provider could accelerate the service system and affect customers' perceptions rather than losing money on a compensation strategy.

Managing the long wait might require early anticipation of the potential guests and their expectations/needs. When a manager becomes more certain about the number of expected guests at a specific time, it should be easy to manage the waits. Gathering information about the type of guests is crucial in determining the waiting times. Waits require managing two

main issues, both the actual and the perceived waits (Dickson, Ford, & Laval, 2005). These authors believe it is important to reduce perceived waiting times. When people think they are waiting for less time than in reality, they tend to indicate more satisfaction on the service evaluation. Managing these two issues would decrease the negative effects of the delay.

In developing service provider performance, many hospitality businesses have started to apply a reservation system service. The reservation system could reduce the impact of delays in the pre-process stage. When guests reserve a specific time to purchase a service, they would avoid standing in a long queue. Guests without reservations mostly do not know the duration of the wait. Therefore, these guests might feel frustrated when they notice that the waiting line is too long, and they might leave if not seated promptly or if the expected waiting times are prolonged. Guests' experiences during the wait will be vague and connected to a feeling of worry (Maister, 1985). However, one of the reservation system problems is late arrivals and no-shows. When customers fail to honor their bookings, the operation system faces a reduction in efficiency because of the excess capacity (Dickson *et al.*, 2005). A well-managed reservation system could make a significant contribution in reducing the negative impact of a delay.

To conclude, this section explored different studies related to delay in services and guest waiting experience. The studies found that delay could affect negatively on the evaluation of the service and guests' satisfaction. Therefore, it has been suggested that it is important to control and manage guests' perception about waiting time when the service provider fails to control the actual waiting time. Moreover, recovery strategies also are a good solution that can be used when delays occur. The studies in this section suggest that compensation plus assistance are the effective solution in terms of recovery strategies.

3. Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the method that was used in this study. First, this chapter addresses the research design. The second part of this chapter is a background about the place of the study. The procedures of the data collection are discussed in the third section. After that a description of the chosen sample is discussed in detail. The fifth section explores the used instruments used in this study. The last part in this section is the data analysis, and in this part more details are presented about the analysis of the gathered data.

3.2. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative method.. Qualitative research was used to gather deep insights and information about guests' wait experience at hotels in Saudi Arabia. Semi-structured interviews were employed to interview guests and managers. To the best of my knowledge, No study has previously been conducted about guests' wait experiences at hotels in Saudi Arabia.

A case study was employed in one of the largest hotels in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The hotel is a five-star hotel of a famous global chain. The first reason for choosing this particular hotel was the excellent welcome and positive attitude toward researchers. The managers in this hotel were willing to help conduct this study unlike other hotels that were approached. The second reason was its popularity and reputation. Exploring a famous five-star hotel would reveal more accurate results than other local chains or four stars hotels because the standards and specifications of the international hotel chain are applied everywhere. The third reason was the high occupancy rate. With a high-level occupancy rate, often the wait for service becomes longer compared with other hotels that have low-occupancy rates. Therefore, it was a good opportunity to look at guests' wait experiences and how hotels manage the waits when they exist.

The research design relied mainly on the previous literature. The design of the questions was based on the three approaches as follows:

1. The objective of the study.

2. The previous literature.
3. Similar studies related to customers' wait experiences.

3.3. Study Setting

This study was conducted in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, during the summer of 2014. Riyadh is the largest city in Saudi Arabia and one of the largest cities in the Middle East. It is considered as the heart of Saudi Arabia because most of the country's company headquarters are located there. Since it is a business city, many tourists visit it all year round for businesses purposes.

In the past ten years, many hotels have been established in Riyadh. The competition level has significantly increased among Riyadh hotels. This increase of competition reflects the importance of business in Riyadh. Nicholas (2013) discusses this in a report on the future of tourism and hospitality in Saudi Arabia. The analysis from the report shows that the number of hotel rooms in Riyadh will grow from 8,400 in 2012 to 15,026 rooms in 2015. This steady growth confirms the demand for Riyadh hotels, and the significance of competition among hotels. In 2012, the number of sold rooms in Saudi Arabia was 50,952,669 according to a report by the MAS center, the Tourism Information and Research in Saudi Arabia (2012). In particular, the number of sold rooms was Riyadh is 3,275,681. Also, the occupancy rate in Riyadh during 2012 was 60.8%.

The selected hotel in this study offers more than 160 guest rooms as well as restaurants, meeting rooms, gym facilities, a swimming pool, valet car service, and free Internet service. The hotel offers three types of rooms: superior room, executive room, and suite. The location of the hotel is attractive for business people as well as those traveling for leisure. It is located in the city center close to business areas and special tourist zones such as historical sites and shopping centers.

3.4. Data Collection Process

The data was collected between July 1 and August 9, 2014. Data was collected from both guests and managers through face-to-face interviews inside the hotel. Interviews were in the hotel lobby, and welcome drinks were offered to the guests. First of all, 11 hotels in Riyadh were visited to get approval to collect the required data. The response of these hotels was

disappointing, with 10 of them refusing to cooperate or be involved in the study. Also, the most commonly observed reaction in these responses was difficulty in understanding and accepting the idea of conducting a study in the hotel. This might be due to the limited number of studies that have been done at hotels in Saudi Arabia.

After many failed attempts, the researcher visited the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA), which is responsible for all hotels in Saudi Arabia. The difficulties in collecting data were discussed with the officials of SCTA, and they understood the problem. Eventually, the researcher got a letter of support from SCTA directed to hotel managers to assist and facilitate the researcher's data collection process. SCTA was extremely helpful and gave the researcher the right to collect data at any hotel in Saudi Arabia. After that, the hotel was carefully selected, and hotel permission was given to the researcher. Hotel managers were willing to do their best to help in conducting this study.

At the beginning of data collection, participants were asked to engage in the study at their most convenient time. Also, the researcher got the participants' permission to make a brief interview during the check-out to ask them about the check-out process. Before each interview, the researcher explained the purpose of this study and provided clear guidelines about participants' rights. Participants were told that they had the choice not to participate. Furthermore, participants were told that all their personal information would be kept confidential. The questions for the interviews were prepared, since the collection method was a semi-structured interview. However, some additional questions were asked during the interview based on participants' responses.

The hotel guests were interviewed first in this study. All guests were interviewed in the lobby, and welcome drinks were offered to them during the interviews. After interviewing the guest sample, hotel managers and employees were invited to participate. Additional questions were asked of the managers based on guests' interviews.

All interviews coincided with the month of Ramadan, which is a holy month for Muslims. During this month, all adults are required to fast from sunrise to sunset. Hence, all governmental sectors and private businesses changed their opening hours to coincide with people's lifestyle changes during Ramadan. For this reason, the interviews were conducted after sunset, which is the most active period of the day. Unfortunately, not all selected days

were active. The goal was to interview one guest a day at least, but some days the flow of guests was lower than expected, and as a result no interviews were conducted.

3.5. Instruments

Based on the literature review, the objective of this study, and other similar studies related to this topic, a semi-structured interview was designed. The interview questions were reviewed with the supervisor of the study. The questions were prepared in English, and then the researcher translated the interview questions for participants who are native Arabic speakers. Moreover, for consent for the study, the researcher received permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is in charge of human subjects. Two versions were designed for participants, one in Arabic and one in English.

Before each interview, the researcher explained the purpose and goals of the study, and then the consent form was given to the participants for review. It is interesting to note that most participants did not read the consent with the exception of participants who were employed at the hotel. In addition, European guests seemed accustomed to interviews because of their noticeable response of reading the entire consent form.

The final version of the questions aimed to explore issues that related to delay. Therefore, there were no direct questions about delay unless the guest complained about the time they had spent waiting for a service. Different questions related to delay were asked based on guests' responses about the duration of service. For the guests' interviews, there were five main questions.

The first question is a general question that explores the overall staying experience. The aim is to discover the objects that guests liked and disliked. Through exploring the guest experience about their wait, more information is provided in an effort to discover any delay issues.

The second question is about the service in the hotel. In this question main departments of the hotel were investigated. The first department was the room division, the second department was food and beverage, the third was general services such as gym facilities and the fourth was other services such as Internet service. First, participants were asked about the service in

general and then different questions were asked based on the specific department being queried.

The third question is about the purpose of visiting, and, based on the purpose, participants were asked if the hotel fit their purpose or not. The fourth question is about services that guests want to see during their next visit. The aim of this question is to find new ways to enhance guests' experiences during their next visit. The fifth question is a general question related to satisfaction in relation to the service.

A recording device and notes were employed in collecting data. Before each interview, permission was given from participants to begin recording. However, one participant, who was the manager of the front desk office, refused to be recorded. Therefore, notes were taken during his interview. It was a challenge to transcribe everything he mentioned, but the general ideas were covered.

3.6. Participants

The project used a convenient sample of 19 participants, which included 15 guests and four hotel staff. Forty-seven guests were asked to participate in the study, but only 15 guests agreed to participate. All guests who participated in the study had stayed at least one night at the hotel. All hotel staff who were invited to take part in the study agreed to participate.

This study relied on the concept of saturation in selecting the sample. A small sample was used since this study was qualitative. Also, since this data was collected at a hotel, there was some difficulty in reaching guests due to their limited time at the location. The majority of the guests were there for business purposes so there were difficulties interviewing them because they spent most of their time out of the hotel.

3.7. Data Analysis

The results of the qualitative data were analyzed by linking them in four categories. During the interviews four major departments in the hotel were investigated in order to evaluate guest satisfaction with waiting experience in particular and guest experience in general. Content analysis and direct quotation were used in this study. This study analyzed the guests' and managers' information separately and then combined them into four types of data: room

division, food and beverage, general services and other services. Each department was analyzed in detail and linked to guests' answers.

4. Chapter 4: Results and Discussions

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the current study. In the first section, significant results are revealed about guests' wait experience and guest general experience. The second section discusses the results of the data in detail, including the four categories: Room division, Food and beverage, General services and other services.

4.2. Results of Analysis

Four departments are discussed in detail. All sections are supported by participants' responses and analyzed as related to the literature review. The first section is about food and beverage. In this section, it was revealed that the variety of food offerings is insufficient, and many people wait at breakfast time. Room service takes approximately between 15 to 20 minutes, which is believed to be worthy service according to the guests.

The second section is the room division. The vital part of this section is the front desk where it takes, on average, eight minutes for check-in or check-out. The majority of guests were happy with this time although there was no other activity applied to control the perceived waiting time such as, TV and newspaper. In addition, guests were facing problems with carrying luggage because there is not always a hotel worker available to assist.

The third section is about general services, and it was revealed that the hotel has crowded parking and guests wait about 10 minutes on average for the worker in charge of valet parking to get their cars from the parking area. Also, the laundry service was satisfactory and not expensive. The laundry worker gets the clothes within two minutes from the call time. Room decor, gym, and the security service were satisfactory and do not waste guests' time.

The fourth section is about other services, and showed that WiFi and Internet service in each room is highly appreciated because it is free and the Internet speed is perfect. The Internet works everywhere in the hotel unlike other hotels. This service is one of the most enjoyable experience guests had in the hotel. Moreover, TV services and newspapers were

praised to some extent. Some guests had complaints regarding the national TV channels and newspapers. Minority guests complained about the lack of international channels and the lack of international newspapers. Most of the newspapers at the hotel were in Arabic and only one international newspaper was written in English language.

4.3. Participants

Figure 4-1 shows the diversity in participants was noticeable in this study.

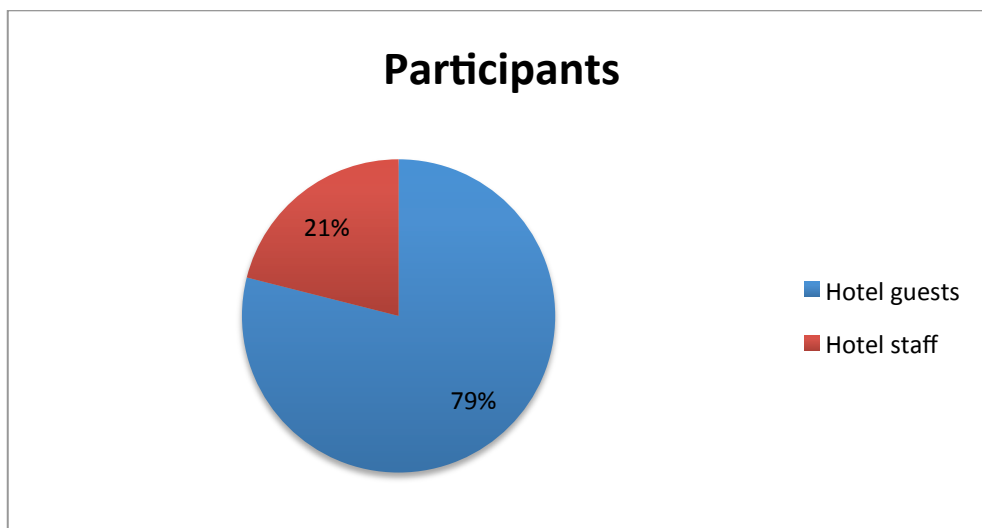


Figure 4-1 Percentage of Participants

There were eight participants from Saudi Arabia, three from Lebanon, and one each from Egypt, Kuwait, France, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, India, and Pakistan.

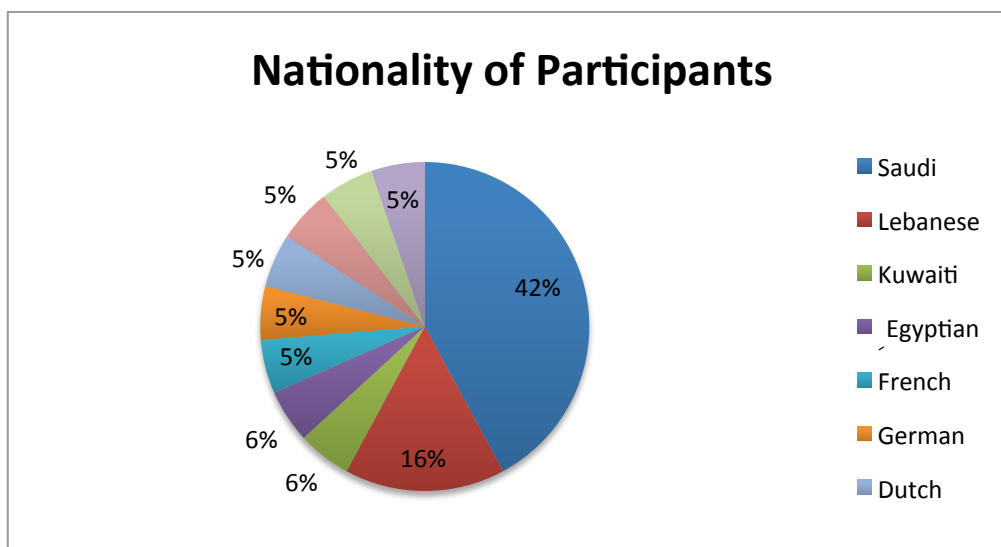


Figure 4-2 Nationality of Participants

Eighteen participants were men and one participant was a woman.

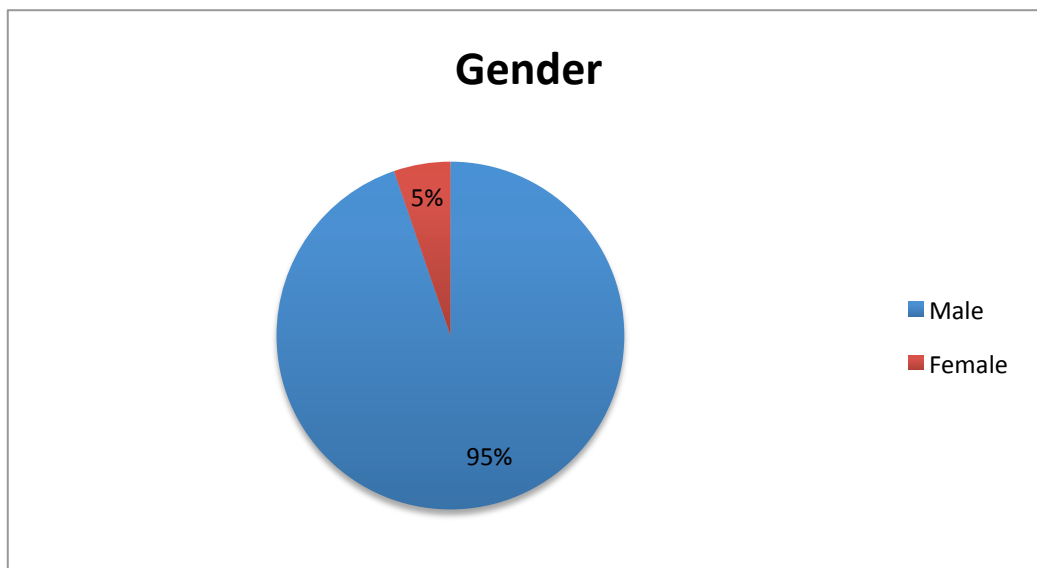


Figure 4-3 Genders of Participants

This remarkable difference between the number of men and women emphasizes the social characteristics of Saudi society. In other words, it is not common in Saudi Arabia for women to stay alone at a hotel. Therefore, most of the hotel's visitors were men. Although, there were nine attempts to interview female guests at the hotel; only one of those attempts succeeded. Also, the oldest participant in this study was 62 years old, and the youngest participant was 26. These age segments represent most of the visitors at the hotel.

Table 4-1 Participants Information

Guest	Gender	Age	Nationality	Purpose of visit	Number of days	The length of interview
Guest 1	Male	37	Saudi	Recreation	3 days	17:00 minutes
Guest 2	Male	35	Saudi	Recreation	2 days	12:00 minutes
Guest 3	Male	55	Dutch	Business	6 days	13:00 minutes
Guest 4	Male	51	French	Business	8 days	7:00 minutes
Guest 5	Male	62	German	Business	9 days	8:00 minutes
Guest 6	Male	46	Italy	Business	3 days	12:00 minutes
Guest 7	Male	35	Egypt	Business	4 days	5:00 minutes
Guest 8	Female	26	Saudi	Business	2 days	11:00 minutes
Guest 9	Male	43	Kuwait	Business	2 days	10:00 minutes
Guest 10	Male	47	Lebanese	Business	5 days	18:00 minutes
Guest 11	Male	28	Saudi	Business	2 days	7:00 minutes
Guest 12	Male	37	Saudi	Recreation	4 days	19:00 minutes
Guest 13	Male	39	Saudi	Business	2 days	15:00 minutes
Guest 14	Male	35	Saudi	Business	7 days	19:00 minutes
Guest 15	Male	40	Lebanese	Business	4 days	11:00 minutes
Executive Chef	Male	33	Lebanese	-----	-----	28:00 minutes
Front Office Manager	Male	36	Indian	-----	-----	Notices
House Keeping Manager	Male	41	Pakistani	-----	-----	21:00 minutes
Recipient	Male	26	Saudi	-----	-----	16:00 minutes

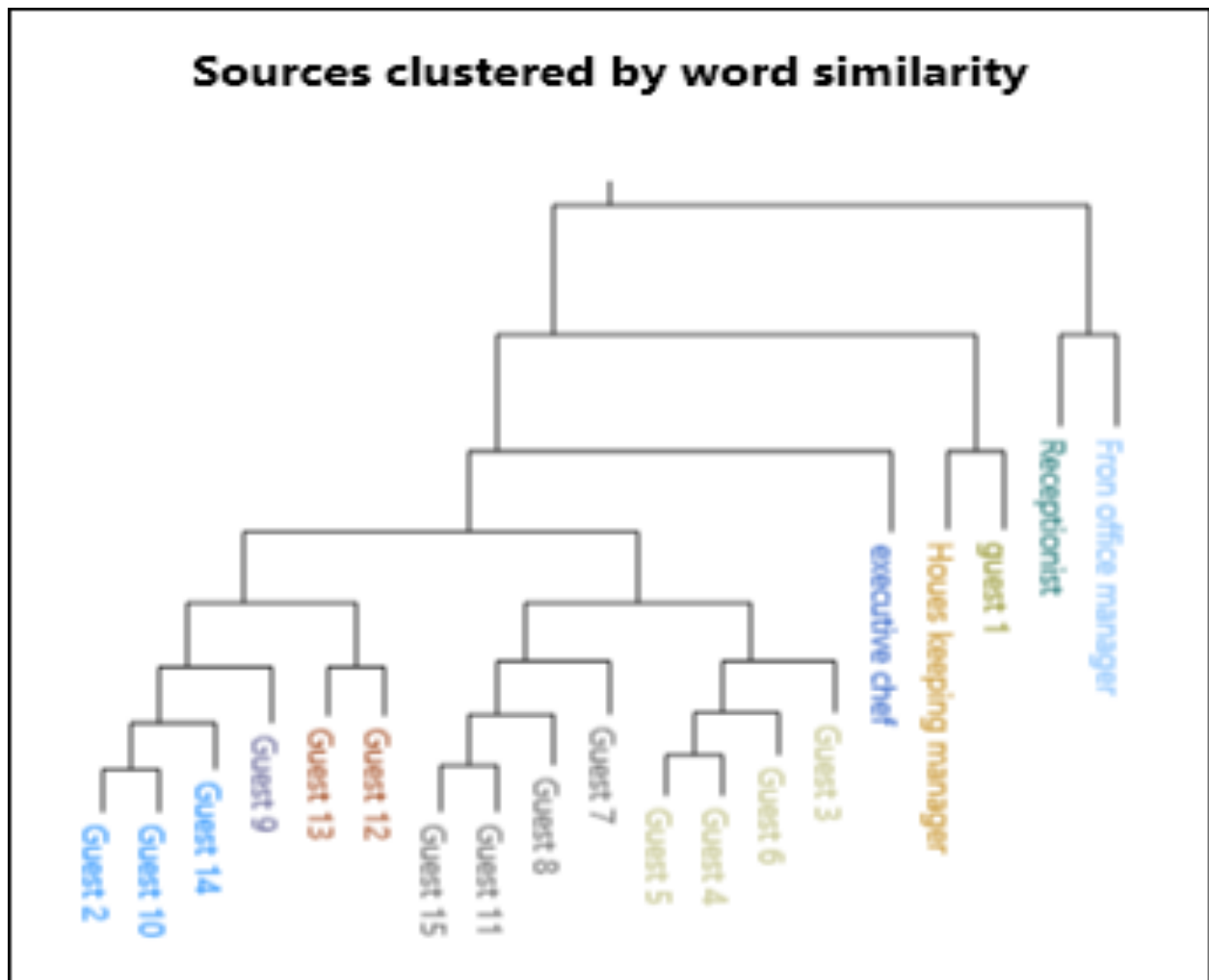


Figure 4-4 Commonalities Among Guests

4.4. Commonalities

Figure 4-1 shows that Guests 12 and 13 did not face any delays. Both guests said that check-in and check-out was quick. According to guest 12 “I didn't face any problem of delay, the reception services or the home service. Their efforts were excellent. I spent about 2 or 3 minutes only for check-in and check-out.” The analysis of guests 2, 10, and 14 showed that they faced wait problems, even at the entrance, because of the unavailability of staff. These guests also complained about the management of staff. According to guest 14 “At any hotel you can find two staff employees standing outside the hotel to help guests whatever the climate, hot, humid or cold, they are always there when you ask for them. Maybe here there was much crowd, so they weren't there to help.”

Guest 9 complained about the size of the room, the bathroom, the material used in the tub, and the decor of hotel, all of which were not complaints of any other guest. Therefore, as shown in Figure 4, he is separate from all guests, showing that his sense of satisfaction is different from the other guests. He also was the most experienced guest at this hotel; it was his twentieth visit.

Table 4-2 Most Enjoyable and Least Enjoyable services at the hotel

Most Enjoyable	Least enjoyable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet (Guest 8, 11, 14) Guest 11 "The internet was excellent and quick in fact." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking (Guest 2, 9, 14) Guest 14: "In fact, I came yesterday about 9 A.M.; there was nearly no one there. I went to check- in, but the official was very late and I didn't find any place to park my car, the parking was really crowded. The receptions asked me to adjust the car while parking!"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location (Guest 8, 9, 11, 14) Guest 8: "I come here almost every week and I found high level of Franchise. This hotel directly, it's one of our best destinations because of its location and service. The location is very sensitive so it would be easy if I want to eat elsewhere." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room Service (Guest 7, 8, 11, 15) Guest 7: "There was a delay with the room service. It is not less than 45 minutes, for example at the so hour, they come before a quarter hour. That's a bit difficult."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room Service (Guest 9, 10) Guest 9: "The service is excellent. I called the laundry, a couple of minutes and the guy was on my door, I called room service they came in 15 minutes." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food variety (Guest 8, 10, 14, 15) Guest 15 "The service was good. They have this problem with the food variety. : Especially when someone come from another country and you do not know many places, so you prefer more variety. This is the only problem I faced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front Desk Office (Guest 1, 7, 8, 15) Guest 15: "The check-in and the check-out were excellent compared to other hotels. I rate it 9/10. It took around five minutes" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of food (Guest 8, 10) Guest 10: "The quality of food in the restaurant needs some improvements, that's number one, number two is the variety of food"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gym (Guest 10) Guest 10: "I tried the gym, it was cool, a little small, but had all the machines and a T.V. I think the facilities are good; I compare it to what I am paying to have that service and it's more than that" 	

Guests 7, 8, 11, and 15 also had similarities in their experiences. The most common feature, which these four guests experienced, was room service. They stated that room service is not good, and they had to wait a long time to receive their order. They all gave positive reviews of the front desk office (check-in and check-out processes). Although they waited for some

time at the front desk for check-in and check-out, they still offered good remarks. This indicates they might not have experienced a five star hotel or an international chain of hotels where the check-in and check-out processes are fast.

Guest 1 is separate from the others in the above Figure, because what he explained was totally different. He had a positive experience dealing with the staff and hotel security. Also, he reported the availability of a wide variety of food choices although the majority of guests had complained about the lack of variety in food choices. . His experience was different from all the other guests. This guest also was happy with the car service and parking facility.

Table 4-3 The Level of Satisfaction about services and overall experience

Guests	Satisfaction level of services and overall experience
Guest 1	9/10
Guest 2	3/10
Guest 3	8/10
Guest 4	9/10
Guest 5	8/10
Guest 6	9/10
Guest 7	7/10
Guest 8	9/10
Guest 9	6/10
Guest 10	9/10
Guest 11	6/10
Guest 12	8/10
Guest 13	8/10
Guest 14	9/10
Guest 15	7/10
Average	7.67/10
Median	8/10

4.5. Discussion of the results

4.5.1. Food and Beverage

Food and beverage is the most vital service that hotels offer to their guests. In this study, it was revealed that breakfast is included in the package and it is free of cost. The time for breakfast is fixed, and the majority of guests partake in this meal. As a results, crowd remains during breakfast time. This is a recognizable wait with guests waiting in queues without any compensation. This situation will negatively impact guests' satisfaction. The majority of guests in the hotel are there for business purposes and have little time to wait for breakfast. Therefore, many guests leave the hotel without taking breakfast, according to the interviews. The crowd during breakfast time is because demand exceeds capacity. There is only one serving table on which breakfast items are kept for all guests.

The variety of food plays an important role in attracting guests to the hotel's restaurants. It was revealed in this study that some guests were not happy with the variety of food. The majority of guests mentioned the problem of insufficient diversity of food. One of the guests claimed that hotel restaurant just offers Lebanese and Italian food, saying " I love Lebanese food and it is really delicious in this restaurant but I've been here for a week and I want to try different food than the Italian and Lebanese food. I think they should offer Asian food."

As Hwang and Lambert (2009) concluded in their research, inadequate capacity might force customers to leave before being served, or customers might not come because of the perceived wait. This is true in this research according to guests' response, as many hotel guests leave the restaurant without taking breakfast, and others do not go to breakfast at all for the sake of saving time for scheduled business meetings. The waiting time for people who are there for leisure is another matter. They often wait up to 30 minutes without complaining, because time is not as important to them.

The room service in this hotel was excellent in term of quality and saving guest's time. Many guests said that room service for food is about 15-20 minutes and that is acceptable because they are also satisfied with the quality of food. Guests do not have high expectations for quick and efficient food delivery in the hotel. Therefore, when they experience such delays, they accept it and do not complain because of the high quality of food.

The hotel management had planned a recovery strategy in case of delays in serving or complaints about food. There is a difference between the menu of a guest and that of a waiter. In the waiter's menu, preparation time is mentioned in front of each item so that the waiter can tell the guest the expected time of delivery of his/her order. The preparation time mentioned in the waiter's menu includes four extra minutes in order to recover cases of delay without affecting the guest experience. In addition, the policy of *mise en place* is strictly followed in the hotel. Accordingly, time will not be wasted preparing menu items' ingredients from scratch, they would be prepared ahead of time regardless of orders flow. Thus, when a guest orders an item on the menu, the item will be prepared in a timely manner. Also, if an item is not available, the waiter must inform the guest immediately to save make the appropriate change and save the guest's time. Otherwise, the hotel would be responsible to compensate him/her with a free meal or discounted food.

The executive chef also mentioned that comparatively cold kitchen items are more time consuming to prepare. The process of preparing orders might be delayed by cold kitchen items, and it is the chef's responsibility to prepare all ordered items as quickly as possible. If a delay occurs, then the hotel management would be responsible, and it will negatively impact customer satisfaction. There is only one restaurant in the hotel, so the number of orders is significant and preparing all orders on time is a major responsibility. If service is slightly late, then guests usually can ignore it. However, if the wait for a meal is significantly long, then guests will complain. Kokkinou and Cranage (2013) defined the acceptable waiting time as two minutes, and after those two minutes the customer might behave negatively. In the hotel, waiters should take orders within two minutes, as guests should not have to wait longer. If the waiter finds that any item of an order is not available, that waiter should inform the customer within two minutes. If there will be delay in informing the guest, it is the responsibility of hotel management to compensate.

4.5.2. Room Division

The hotel front desk has many procedures, and it takes a while for new guests to complete the lengthy check-in process. They have to sign papers, show their credit card and a photocopy of their passport, get their room key, and so on. Therefore, the check-in process takes about eight minutes on average and is acceptable to the majority of guests. According to guest number 8 "As I was a customer in other hotels I can tell that comparing to them the

check-in and out process here is very quick and they are flexible for example if there is a empty room before check-in time then they are happy to accommodate you in, I tried other hotels not only in Riyadh but in other places and cities in the world I think it is quick.” Usually guests have experience at different hotels, and they believe the service at the front desk for check-in and check-out is satisfactory compared to other hotels in Saudi Arabia according to the data. The study by Dawes and Rowley (1996) also mentioned that guests’ previous experience is important in order to evaluate the overall experience. Guests are satisfied with the check-in and check-out procedure time because the waiting time is not longer than the actual waiting time. Thus, customers show satisfactory attitudes toward front desk service.

Dawes and Rowley (1996) also mentioned the importance of time for customers and that engaging them in other activities during any waiting time is a significant tactic. However, the majority of participants in this study claimed they did not receive anything to make their time enjoyable during waiting, although some said that they were given juice while waiting. The front desk could arrange activities like having newspapers available, offering beverages, viewing art pieces near the front desk, or watching TV screens and aquariums. These activities are in the direct control of hotel management and change the expectations of guests. Other activities such as website downlink, failure of Internet, heavy rain, electricity, and strikes outside the hotel are not in the direct control of hotel management. The delay caused by these kinds of events is not the failure of management but nonetheless increases the perceived waiting time of guests. In this type of situation, if the front desk takes exceptional action, it could boost customer satisfaction, because the perceived wait would be less than the actual time spent waiting (Voorhees *et al.*, 2009).

Maister (1985) proposed eight factors that could positively affect guest perception. Among these eight factors, the most important is the valued services provided to waiting guests. If the front desk provides additional valued services, guests would wait a longer time without complaint. However, if a guest is in hurry because of a flight time or business meeting, he/she might not be satisfied and leave the room without using the service. The valued services for waiting guests can be different, depending upon each customer’s age, gender, their importance, and the availability of resources. If a delay occurs in restaurant food service, this can be valued by giving discounts or offering a free dinner. During one

interview, a front desk manager mentioned that if there is a delay in preparing the room, upgrading the room to the next level is common.

It is the responsibility of the front desk manager to maintain a crew of people in front of the hotel to welcome guests and assist with luggage. Unfortunately, some guests had negative views about the unavailability of workers in front of hotel. According to guests, in the USA and even in Dubai, workers are available in front of hotel for car parking, luggage carrying, and welcoming. However, in this hotel, there was a lack of workers, and guests complained that either they had to wait for someone to carry their luggage or park their car, or they had to do it themselves. This type of wait is not perceived and it is also not actual. Guests don't know when a worker will come to assist them. Therefore, they do not rely on workers and commonly carry their own luggage and park their cars in the crowded underground parking lots. This negatively impacts the quality of service, which some guests complained about.

4.5.3. General Services

The general services in the hotel include the parking facility, laundry room decor, security, and gym facility. These services are part of any international hotel chain, particularly four and five star. It is not necessary that every customer uses these services, but they directly impact guest satisfaction levels. The first guest interviewed mentioned that security in this hotel is of a high level and he was satisfied with it. He referred to the security in relation to when a pizza delivery boy was not allowed to deliver to his room.

The problem of parking was mentioned by almost every participant who had his/her own vehicle. Guests either had to go to the underground parking to retrieve their vehicle themselves, which takes about 10 minutes, or wait for 10 minutes for a worker from the hotel to bring the car from the parking garage. Moreover, the parking garage always remained crowded, and it was difficult for guests to maneuver in a tight area and park their cars safely. This situation wastes considerable time and affects the overall quality of hotel service. In this way, the waiting time of guests becomes long, which makes them passively impatient and shows less satisfaction with the service (Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999). During this waiting time, guests are not offered anything to remain engaged or to accelerate the waiting time. This wait is before service occurs, which carries more weight as compared to a during or after service delay.

Participants felt that laundry service at the hotel was satisfactory and offered at reasonable rates. When laundry service was called, an employee showed up within two minutes, which is acceptable in the hotels industry. (Kokkinou & Cranage, 2013). One participant had a bad experience with laundry service because his suit was destroyed. In this case, hotel management gave the participant the full amount to buy a new suit as a recovery strategy. A negative assessment by a guest should be managed in two ways. First, the duration of the wait should be decreased. In this case, the guest who lost his suit should be compensated at the earliest possible time. Otherwise, he might displease the atmosphere of the hotel. Second, those variables that could diminish the losses should be applied. This second option was properly applied in this case, as the guest was given an amount equal to a new suit. In this way, the guest's perception is controlled, and he gave good reviews about the overall service of the hotel (Voorhees *et al.*, 2009).

Another important service in the hotel is health services or gym service. According to those participants who used this service, the gym was clean and all major exercise machines were available. The gym was not crowded, as only selected people went there for exercise and at different times. Guests did not have to wait to enjoy this service and had positive remarks about the gym facility.

4.5.4. Other Services

Other services meet international standards and are specific to customers. These include Internet, location, newspaper, TV channels, outdoor sitting, and communication skills of workers. The experience of guests with Internet remained very positive, and almost all of them gave good remarks. Internet is now an integral part of human life, particularly for business people. It must be remembered that the majority of guests in this hotel are there for business purposes. The hotel provides an Internet connection in every room as well as WiFi service throughout the hotel. Participants did not have to wait for a connection, and the speed of Internet also was good. This saved them time and made them happy.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of guests were in Saudi Arabia for business purposes. The location of the hotel is ideal for these people because most of the major government and main offices of private companies are near the hotel. This not only saved guests time

and energy but also money in the form of taxi fares. Furthermore, the location of the hotel is ideal for tourists, as most major markets and sites are nearby.

Newspaper and TV channels are a major problem for international hotels, as it is not possible to provide national newspapers of every country, and the same applies to TV channels. One participant claimed that during the waiting time of 10 minutes for parking, “I was not offered any drink, newspaper or anything else to pass my time.” Many researchers supported the notion that guests must be engaged in an activity, because it will reduce the perceived time (McDougall & Levesque, 1999; Katz, Larson, and Larson 1991). According to these authors, the variables that can help in controlling the waiting time are: identifying appropriate time, engaging customers in exciting activities, and informing customers of expected waiting time especially when they are reacting badly. Providing newspapers during the waiting time is engaging customer with an activity, and it can change the whole mindset of the guest about the quality of service.

Communication skills also are of high importance, which is completely neglected at the support staff level in this hotel. In Saudi Arabia, a large number of support staff are from India, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Bangladesh. Some of the workers from these countries are not professional or certified hotel workers. They do not know how to welcome guests and how to behave appropriately in a particular situation. This results in frustration and wasting guests’ time, as they don’t understand what they are saying or want to say. This kind of delay is during the service and significantly impacts the perception of guests (Maister, 1985).

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, five topics are explored in detail. The first section explores the main findings of this study. These findings are the major outcomes of the gathered data. The next section provides some suggestions for future study in Saudi Arabia. Recommendations to the selected hotel are offered in the third section. The fourth section explores some implications of the current study. Finally, limitations of this study are discussed in detail.

5.2. Summary of Major Findings

This study investigated guest experience at hotels in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Particularly, this study examined the guest waiting experience and the role of delay on overall experience. The findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature.

First, the study found that guests' experience is more likely to be satisfactory in terms of services provided and hotel facilities. The majority of guests were satisfied with the facilities and services provided by the hotel regardless of the waiting experience; however, this does not mean guests are not concerned about their time but that their overall experience was enjoyable. Moreover, the study revealed that general services impact directly on the guests' satisfaction. The Internet service and its speed was one of the most enjoyable services everywhere in the hotel. This finding indicates that the quality of services provided by the hotel play an important role in guests' satisfaction.

Second, the study showed that there are significance waits in the parking services. The service provided by the hotel, valet parking, does not meet guests' expectations. A common complaint with interviewees was the long wait for the valet service. Two discrete reasons emerged from this:

1. The unavailability of workers in the front of the hotel.
2. The crowd on the hotel main street.

Since the hotel offered underground parking to guests, the process of parking a car should be easier; however, in this study guest were struggling with this service and it did not meet their expectations.

The third major finding was that the variety of food provided in the restaurants and through room service is limited. Many guests mentioned the issue of the food diversity, and the majority of them were international guests. There was a sense amongst interviewees of the need to offer more varied cuisines. A minority of guests believes the diversity of food is not a major issue; however, they believe their experience would be much better if the food were diverse. This issue of the lack of diversity affects the hotel's revenue through making the current guests dine in different restaurants out of the hotel in order to fulfill their desire or need to try different cuisines.

One unanticipated finding was the significant queue during the breakfast time. Because the breakfast was included in the rate of the room, many guests tend to partake in it in the hotel restaurant. However, some guests preferred to breakfast at their workplace in order to avoid waiting. Since the interviews were conducted in Ramadan month when the majority of Muslim guests are fasting, the queue should be less than the regular months; however, this long queue indicates a large number of foreign tourists for the purpose of business. On the other hand, there was also a significant waiting time during the breakfast time (Iftar), and this waiting experience was negative according to the majority of guests. The sense of discomfort during the waiting critically affects the guests' satisfaction about the dining experience.

Another finding in this study was the excellent location of the hotel. The common view among participants in this study was the hotel location, which they believed to be unique. The hotel location was one of the most enjoyable experience that guest had during their stay. A possible explanation for this might be that hotel is located near the business district in Riyadh, and since most of the tourists visit Riyadh for businesses purposes, hotel location is important to them.

The sixth major finding was the high satisfaction with the speed of check-in and check-out procedures. The majority of guests were happy with the quick procedures of the check-in and check-out of the hotel. The results of this study have shown that the average time for check-in and check-out was eight minutes. During the waiting for check-in and check-out, the results have revealed that guests were not engaged with any kind of activities that could accelerate the perceived waiting time.

One more important finding was related to the food quality and the room service. The results of this study showed that the room service was satisfactory in terms of waiting time. The majority of guests believe that fresh food was worth waiting for. The average waiting time for room service was 15-20 minutes, and guests were satisfied with that. However, the majority of guests mentioned that food quality must be improved in order to meet their desires and needs. Overall, these results indicate that guests are satisfied with the room service in terms of service speed; however, guests believe that the quality of food should be improved to make their experience valuable.

Finally, the study found that the recovery strategies offered by the hotel are considered as excellent in terms of compensation. The evidence from the data has shown that compensation could be offer to the guests by two methods:

1. Upgrade the room to the next available room on the list.
2. Compensate the guest by providing full board, including the three meals.

Also, the results of this study indicate that guests are not engaged in activities to alleviate the perceived waiting times unless the service provider breaks the promised service and subsequently offer alternative activities/compensation for the wait.

5.3. Suggestions, Recommendations, Implications, and Limitations

After conducting a study on the guests' waiting experience at hotels in Saudi Arabia, it is suggested that more research needs to be done at hotels in that country since there is a lack of data in Saudi Arabia related to guests' waiting experience. Many recommendations have been suggested for future research related to guests' waiting experience.

First, this study recommends investigating the efficiency of a hotel's operational management during the month of Ramadan in terms of service quality and delays. In hotels in Saudi Arabia, the demand is increasing for food and beverage services during Ramadan because many individuals prefer to dine at hotels when they fast. During Ramadan, many hotels also serve their food at a special area called a Ramadan tent, which is a special hall or tent with distinct decorations for the holiday. Therefore, many guests take the opportunity of Ramadan to visit hotels for dining purposes. Investigating the efficiency of hotel operational management during Ramadan would provide clear insights into how to improve guests' experience.

Second, future research might include a study about the effects of delay on the purpose of a guest's visit in order to develop solutions for all types of travelers in regard to service delays in Saudi Arabia. Guests traveling for leisure purposes differ than those traveling for business purposes; therefore, investigating the effects of the delay on these types of travellers would provide clear insight into the different methods that can be used to make their experience memorable.

Third, future research might also compare the impact of the delay on guests between two hotels from the same brand, one in Saudi Arabia and one in Europe, for example. The study was conducted with Saudi guests and international guests in Saudi Arabia and the responses are closely connected with traditions and culture of Saudi Arabia. Guests from different cultures might respond differently to the same experience. Therefore, it would be more beneficial to conduct the same study in another place such as Dubai, and gather comparable data.

On the other hand, the current study also suggests some essential recommendations for the hotel. First of all, the evidence from this study suggests that managers have to gather more information about their potential guests. The results have shown that the majority of guests were satisfied with the overall experience; guests believe there are some weaknesses that need to be improved to make their experience more enjoyable. By identifying the preferences of potential guests, the hotel can deliver a high quality of services to meet their expectations. Second, the findings of this study suggest that the hotel should improve the service in terms of speed, performance, and quality. By improving the service, the rate of satisfaction will increase, and guest expectations will be met.

The findings of this study have important implications for developing the hospitality industry in Saudi Arabia. First, through investigating guests' experience with different issues related to delays, the results of this study might be a helpful source to hotels in Saudi Arabia in order to distinguish the strengths and weak areas at hotels. Through defining these areas, hotels will get several opportunities to enhance the services provided to guests.

Another important practical implication is that conducting a study about the waiting experience in Saudi Arabia will create competitive advantages among hotels through providing deep information about guests' perspectives to hotels. Through in-depth understanding of guest perspectives, hotels will have the opportunity to keep the guests

satisfied and to attract new potential guests. However, this implication can get succeeded when managers fulfill guests' needs.

Finally, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, the time of gathering the data, was during the month of Ramadan, when the majority of guests are fasting. The results of this study might not represent the actual efficiency of the hotel services, especially room/restaurant service. Since this month is considered a special month to Muslim people, the high demand on the dining experience during the times they break their fast might affect the performance of the hotel during this month. Second, the current study only examined one hotel; therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all other hotels in Saudi Arabia. The results might be much more useful if the sample size were larger. Third, since the study employed a semi-structured interview method, the majority of guests were concerned about the length of the interview, and many guests refused to participate in the study because it is an interview. Those guests who are in rush prefer to have a survey they can complete later rather than participate in an interview. Thus, a survey might be a good solution to gather more data at hotels in Saudi Arabia.

References

- Bitran, G., & Lojo, M. (1993). A framework for analyzing the quality of the customer interface. *European Management Journal*, 11(4), 385–396. doi:10.1016/0263-2373(93)90002-Y
- Chebat, J.-C., Filiatrault, P., Gélinas-Chebat, C., & Vaninsky, A. (1995). Impact of waiting attribution and consumer's mood on perceived quality. *Journal of Business Research*, 34(3), 191–196. doi:10.1016/0148-2963(95)98346-4
- Corsten, H., & Stuhlmann, S. (1998). Capacity management in service organisations. *Technovation*, 18(3), 163–178. doi:10.1016/S0166-4972(97)90121-8
- Davis, M. M., & Heineke, J. (1998). How disconfirmation, perception and actual waiting times impact customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 9(1), 64–73.
- Davis, M. M., & Maggard, M. J. (1990). An analysis of customer satisfaction with waiting times in a two-stage service process. *Journal of Operations Management*, 9(3), 324–334. doi:10.1016/0272-6963(90)90158-A
- Davis, M. M., & Vollmann, T. E. (1990). A framework for relating waiting time and customer satisfaction in a service operation. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 4(1), 61–69. doi:10.1108/EUM00000000002506
- Dawes, J., & Rowley, J. (1996). The waiting experience: Towards service quality in the leisure industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 8(1), 16–21.
- Dickson, D., Ford, R. C., & Laval, B. (2005). Managing real and virtual waits in hospitality and service organizations. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 46(1), 52–68.
- Durrande-Moreau, A., & Usunier, J.-C. (1999). Time styles and the waiting experience: An exploratory study. *Journal of Service Research*, 2(2), 173–186. doi:10.1177/109467059922005

- Hensley, R. L., & Sulek, J. (2007). Customer satisfaction with waits in multi-stage services. *Managing Service Quality*, 17(2), 152–173. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09604520710735173
- Hui, M. K., & Bateson, J. E. G. (1991). Perceived control and the effects of crowding and consumer choice on the service experience. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(2), 174–84.
- Hwang, J. (2008). Restaurant table management to reduce customer waiting times. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 11(4), 334–351. doi:10.1080/15378020802519603
- Hwang, J., & Lambert, C. U. (2006). Customers' identification of acceptable waiting times in a multi-stage restaurant system. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 8(1), 3–16. doi:10.1300/J369v08n01_02
- Hwang, J., & Lambert, C. U. (2009). The use of acceptable customer waiting times for capacity management in a multistage restaurant. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 33(4), 547–561. doi:10.1177/1096348009344233
- Jones, P., & Dent, M. (1994). Improving service: Managing response time in hospitality operations. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 14(5), 52.
- Katz, K. L., Larson, B. M., & Larson, R. C. (1991). Prescription for the waiting-in-line blues: Entertain, enlighten, and engage. *Sloan Management Review*, 32(2), 44.
- Kokkinou, A., & Cranage, D. A. (2013). Using self-service technology to reduce customer waiting times. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 435–445. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.11.003
- Larson, R. C. (1987). OR Forum—Perspectives on queues: Social justice and the psychology of queueing. *Operations Research*, 35(6), 895–905. doi:10.1287/opre.35.6.895
- Lee, K. W., & Lambert, C. U. (2006). Using simulation to manage waiting time in a cafeteria. *Information Technology in Hospitality*, 4(4), 127–141. doi:10.3727/154595306779868458
- Lee, W., & Lambert, C. U. (2005). The effect of waiting time and affective reactions on customers' evaluation of service quality in a cafeteria. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 8(2), 19–37. doi:10.1300/J369v08n02_03

Maister, David H. (1985), The Psychology of Waiting Lines in Czepiel, John A.,

Michael R. Solomon and Carol F. Surprenant (eds) *The Service*

Encounter, D.C. Heath & Company, pp. 113-123.

McDougall, G. H. G., & Levesque, T. J. (1999). Waiting for service: The effectiveness of recovery strategies. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11(1), 6–15.

McGuire, K. A., Kimes, S. E., Lynn, M., Pullman, M. E., & Lloyd, R. C. (2010). A framework for evaluating the customer wait experience. *Journal of Service Management*, 21(3), 269–290. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09564231011050760>

Nicholas, R. (2013). *The rise of the Kingdom*. Retrieved from meetmiddleeast website: <http://www.meetmiddleeast.com/articles/show/the-rise-of-the-kingdom>

Pruyn, A., & Smidts, A. (1998). Effects of waiting on the satisfaction with the service: Beyond objective time measures. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 15(4), 321–334. doi:10.1016/S0167-8116(98)00008-1

Sarkar, A., Mukhopadhyay, A. R., & Ghosh, S. K. (2011). Improvement of service quality by reducing waiting time for service. *Simulation Modelling Practice and Theory*, 19(7), 1689–1698. doi:10.1016/j.simpat.2011.03.004

Stokols, D. (1972). On the distinction between density and crowding: Some implications for future research. *Psychological Review*, 79(3), 275–277. doi:10.1037/h0032706

Taylor, S. (1994). Waiting for service: The relationship between delays and ev. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(2), 56.

Tourism Statistics in Saudi Arabia. (2012). Tourism Information and Research Center (MAC).

Voorhees, C. M., Baker, J., Bourdeau, B. L., Brocato, E. D., & Cronin, J. J. (2009). It depends: Moderating the relationships among perceived waiting time, anger, and regret. *Journal of Service Research*, 12(2), 138–155. doi:10.1177/1094670509336744

6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix A: The consent form (English version)

Introduction and Purpose

As a part of my master's study at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY, USA, I'm Khaled Alsumait, and I kindly invite you to participate in my research project on customers' waiting experience in the hospitality industry.

Procedure

If you agree to participate in the research, I will conduct an interview with you at a time and a location of your choice. The interview will include questions about your waiting experience at the hotel. It is expected to last for 20 minutes. With your permission, I would like to audiotape and take notes during the interview. The purpose of recording is to keep the information you provide accurately; this will only be used for the transcription of the interview. If you feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn the recorder off. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead.

Confidentiality

The data will be treated anonymously and confidential. If the results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.

CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

Participant's Name (please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at [+966505880883] or [kfa8473@rit.edu].

6.2. Appendix B: The consent form (Arabic version)

الغرض من البحث:

كجزء من دراستي لمرحلة الماجستير في جامعة روشستر للعلوم والتقنية في مدينة روشستر، نيويورك، أنا خالد فهد الصميت، أُرغب بدعوتك للمشاركة في موضوع دراستي عن تجربة الانتظار للعملاء في صناعة الضيافة.

الإجراءات:

إذا كنت موافق للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، سوف أجري معك مقابلة قصيرة في الوقت والمكان الذي ترغب به. المقابلة سوف تشمل أسئلة عن تجربة انتظارك للخدمات في الفندق. من المتوقع ان لا تزيد مدة المقابلة عن ٢٠ دقيقة. بعد أخذ الإذن منك، أُرغب في تسجيل المقابلة صوتياً وتدوين بعض النقاط في مذكرتي طوال فترة المقابلة. الغرض من تسجيل اللقاء صوتياً هو للحفاظ على المعلومات بشكل دقيق، سوف يستعمل التسجيل فقط في نسخ معلومات المقابلة. إذا شعرت بعدم الراحة في أي وقت طوال المقابلة، سوف يتم إقفال التسجيل الصوتي، إذا رغبت بعدم تسجيل اللقاء صوتياً، سوف اكتفي بتدوين الملاحظات بدلاً من ذلك.

الخصوصية:

سوف يتم معالجة البيانات على أساس الخصوصية و بدون أسماء. إذا تم نشر نتائج هذه الدراسة أو عرضها، جميع الأسماء بالإضافة إلى أن معلومات المتقدمين لن تستخدم في الدراسة وسوف تحفظ بشكل سري.

الموافقة:

سوف يتم تقديم نسخة من هذا النموذج إليك للحفاظ على حقوقك.

إذا كنت موافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، الرجاء التوقيع في الأسفل مع تدوين التاريخ:

الاسم

التوقيع

6.3. Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Guide

Customers

- 1- How was your stay?
- 2- How was the service?
- 3- What was the purpose of your visit?
- 4- What was your expectation about the experience?
- 5- What could have been done to improve your waiting experience?
- 6- What is your satisfaction level about the service on a scale from 1- 10 and why?

Employees

- 1- What kinds of strategies do managers use to develop guests' experiences?

6.4. Appendix D: Support letter from the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities



إلى من يهمه الأمر

الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة الأستاذ/ خالد فهد الصميت

سلمهم الله

السادة مدراء الفنادق

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد

يقوم الأستاذ/ خالد بن فهد الصميت بإجراء دراسة حول "ثقافة انتظار النزلاء للخدمة بمرافق الايواء السياحي" في المناطق التالية (الرياض - الشرقية - مكة المكرمة والمدينة المنورة)، حيث أنه يقوم حالياً بجمع البيانات اللازمة لإنهاء مشروع التخرج في برنامج الماجستير في تخصص "إدارة السياحة والضيافة" من جامعة روشستر للعلوم والتقنية بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. أمل منكم تسهيل مهمته في جمع البيانات المطلوبة لإتمام هذه الدراسة.

ولكم تحياتنا،،،

نائب الرئيس المساعد للتراخيص

المهندس / أحمد بن محمد العيسى

6.5. Appendix E: Translation of the support letter

To all hotel managers,

Mr. Khaled Alsumait is doing a study about customer waiting experience in the following regions (Riyadh, Eastern region, and Western region), where he is now collecting the required data for his master's project in the program of hospitality and tourism management at the university Rochester Institute of Technology in the United States.

We hope you will facilitate his mission in collecting the required data to complete his study.

Best regards,

6.6. Appendix F: Coding by Nodes

